WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A method of recognizing handwriting, comprising:

obtaining a sample of handwriting;

segmenting said sample into separate handwritten

words; and

attempting to recognize a whole handwritten word

without attempting to recognize any individual letter of

the whole handwritten word.

2.   A method as in claim 1, wherein said recognizing

comprises determining a silhouette of the word, and

matching said silhouette to one of a plurality of reference

silhouettes.

3.   A method as in claim 2, been said recognizing

comprises determining features of the silhouette.

4.   A method as in claim 3, wherein said features of

the silhouette includes high-profile features, and low

profile features, and locations of said high-profile

features and said low-profile features.

5. A method as in claim 3, wherein said determining features comprises determining prime features.

6. A method as in claim 5, further comprising super enclosing said prime features to form hybrid features.

7. A method as in claim 6, further comprising sorting said features by first syllable blends.

8. A method as in claim 1, wherein said attempting comprises categorizing said whole hidden handwritten word according to its overall silhouette.

9. A method as in claim 8, wherein said categorizing comprises categorizing positions of features in said handwritten word, and categorizing first syllable blends of said handwritten word.

10. A method as in claim 1, wherein said sample of handwriting includes family names.

11. A method as in claim 10, further comprising forming a list of a plurality of family names, and forming silhouette information about said plurality of family

4 names, and comparing said separate handwritten words to

5 said plurality of family names.

1   12. A method as in claim 11, wherein said comparing

2 comprises forming silhouette information, and comparing

3 said silhouette information into said silhouette

4 information about said plurality of family names.

1   13. A method as in claim 12, wherein said silhouette

2 information includes information about the presence of high

3 and low parts in the written word and the position of those

4 high and low parts.

1   14. A method as in claim 12 wherein said silhouette

2 information includes first syllable blends in the word.

1   15. A method, comprising:

2   analyzing a sample of handwriting by analyzing a whole

3 word of said sample at any one time, said analyzing

4 comprising forming information indicative of a silhouette

5 of said whole word, and comparing said information with a

6 database of information about other silhouettes.

16. A method as in claim 15, wherein said database of

2 information comprises a database of information obtained

3 from a list of possible words.

17. ~~A method as in claim 16 wherein said~~ words are

2 family names, ~~and said~~ list of possible words is a

3 ~~telephone book.~~

18. A method as in claim 15, wherein said silhouette

2 information includes information indicative of high parts

3 in the word and low parts in the word, and positions of

4 said high parts and low parts in the word.

1 19. A method as in claim 15, wherein said silhouette

2 information includes information about first syllable

3 blends in the word.

1 20. A method as in claim 18, wherein said silhouette

2 information also includes information about first syllable

3 blends in the word.

1 21. ~~A method as in claim 15, wherein~~ said silhouette

2 ~~information includes prime~~ profiles indicative of specified

3 ~~features, and concatenated~~ profiles indicative of

4 combinations at specified features.

1   22. A method as in claim 18, wherein each of a

2 plurality of silhouette information's is provided with a

3 ~~number.~~

1 23. A method as in claim 18, wherein each feature is

2 assigned a number.